

Prosser House  
1454 East Tenth Street  
Indianapolis  
Marion County  
Indiana

HABS No. IND-35

HABS  
IND  
49-IND  
4-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

## PROSSER HOUSE

HABS  
IND  
49-IND  
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Location: 1454 East Tenth Street, Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana.

Present Owners: J.P. Seiberling and F.M. Howard, 1454 East Tenth Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Present Occupants: Owners.

Present Use: Residence.

Brief Statement of Significance: Built in 1886 by a plaster contractor, this is a medium-sized house with extensive elaborate plaster decoration.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: The site, according to the abstract, belonged to the Fletcher estate. The first owner of the house and site was William Prosser, the builder of the house.
2. Date of erection: 1886.
3. Designer: William Prosser.
4. Builder, suppliers, etc.: William Prosser and Mr. G. Gaspari.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: Planting box removed from front of studio 1956. Front porch rebuilt, moorish tile panels replaced by raked plywood panels, 1956. Rear dormer, west elevation, altered 1955. Present roofing material installed 1955. All of these alterations by present owners.
6. Reference: Lotys Benning Stewart, "A House on Tenth Street," The Indianapolis Star Magazine, December 27, 1959, pp. 30-31.
7. Sources of Information: Interview with Mrs. G. Gaspari, 917 East Eleventh Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

- B. Likely Sources not yet Investigated: Information gained from an interview with Mrs. D. Gaspari, 917 East Tenth Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, indicates that Mr. Prosser, builder and first owner of the house, lost much of his fortune because of union trouble while finishing the interior of the Claypool Hotel in Indianapolis. He and his family then moved to New Orleans, Louisiana. Some members of his family may have more information there.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: This house shows an interesting use of detail, especially in the decorated plaster ceilings, unusual in a house of this size.
2. Condition of Fabric: Fair - in process of being restored by the present owners.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Over-all dimensions and Orientation: House is one-and-one-half stories, plus partial basement. The main unit is square, divided into four rooms plus a studio in a front wing and a bath and kitchen in back. The second floor has one bedroom in the rear and is attic space in the front. First floor area is 1600 square feet. The house faces south.
2. Foundations: Poured concrete.
3. Wall construction: Main part of the house has wood stud walls with decorated stucco exterior. Studio on the south, front side of the house has concrete block walls with stucco exterior.
4. Chimneys: Brick covered with stucco on exterior.
5. Openings
  - a. Doors: Lighted wood panel exterior doors.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Double hung, wood windows; no shutters.
6. Roof
  - a. Shape, covering: Hip roofs with three gables on front part of house. The rear part of the roof has a flat section in the middle. The roof was originally covered with slate; but the slate was removed by the present owners in 1955, and the roof is now covered with asphalt shingles.
  - b. Cornice, eaves: Box cornice. Denticulated eaves.
  - c. Dormers: Originally there were five gabled dormers, but one dormer at the northwest corner of the house was covered with a flat roof by the present owners in 1955.

C. Technical Description of Interiors

1. Floor Plans: Partial basement. First floor - studio in front, main house square with four rooms, kitchen and bath in back under shed roof; the bath was probably a pantry originally. Second floor - attic in front, a large bedroom with closets in back. According to Mrs. G. Caspari there was also a sleeping porch behind this, over the kitchen, which has been removed.
2. Stairways: Enclosed stairway to second floor. 2 x 8 tread and stringer stair to basement.
3. Flooring: Main floor - 1x6 oak flooring. Studio originally had a concrete floor directly on grade.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plastered walls and elaborately decorated plastered ceilings.
5. Doorways and doors: Four panel wood doors.
6. Trim: Painted wood trim with some of the baseboards of plaster.
7. Hardware: Cast brass.
8. Lighting: Originally gas. Now electric.
9. Heating: Originally fireplaces or stove; now central.

D. Site

1. General setting: The house is situated on a level corner lot, across from a large high school campus, approximately one-fourth mile from center of city, in an older, somewhat run-down, neighborhood.
2. Walks: Brick, concrete porch is at the front and the back.
3. Landscaping: Privet hedges and maple trees. There was a planting box beneath the studio window at the front of the house which was removed in 1957.

Prepared by John W. Carmack, Architect  
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